

Serial No. 10/533,624

PATENT
Docket No. 072998-012500RECEIVED
CENTRAL FAX CENTER

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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**Claim 1 (currently amended):** A vaginal speculum comprising:

- two spoon blades, which are intended for introduction into the vagina, which are elongated and are located alongside and opposite one another, and which are mutually hinging about a hinge with a hinge axis running in the widthwise direction of the spoon blades;
- a handle module provided with operating handle and a handgrip, the spoon blades being fixed detachably on the handle module,

wherein the speculum is constructed in modular fashion with the handle module and a spoon blade module;

wherein spoon blades and the hinge are provided on the spoon blade module;

~~in that wherein~~ the speculum further comprises:

- a connecting means for connecting together in a disconnectable manner the handle module and the spoon blade module; and
- locking means for locking the spoon blades in an open position; and
- transmission means for transmitting movement of the operating handle into relative swinging of the spoon blades;

wherein the transmission means are provided on the spoon blade module

wherein the locking means are provided on the spoon blade module and comprise locking elements that are designed to hold the spoon blades locked in the open state in the vagina when the handle module ~~of the spoon blade module~~ is disconnected from the spoon blade module after the spoon blades have been introduced into the vagina and are in the open state.

Claim 2 (original): The vaginal speculum as claimed in claim 1, in which the locking elements can be disconnected.

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Claim 3 (previously presented): The vaginal speculum as claimed in claim 1, in which the spoon blade module is provided externally with at least one surface that tapers relative to the longitudinal direction of the spoon blades in the distal direction of the latter, upon which surface, when the speculum has been introduced into the vagina, the sphincter vagina can act in such a way that a force acting in the distal direction is exerted upon the speculum, which force holds the speculum in the vagina.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The vaginal speculum as claimed in claim 1, in which the hinge is situated in the vagina when the spoon blades have been introduced into the vagina, and in which the hinge is provided on the underside of the spoon blade module.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The vaginal speculum as claimed in claim 1, in which the hinge comprises a strip of material with a flexibility that permits hinging.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The vaginal speculum as claimed in claim 1, in which the spoon blades are provided with protuberances on the outside at edge parts of the spoon blades that rest against each other—or face each other—when the spoon blades are closed.

Claim 7 (previously presented): The vaginal speculum as claimed in claim 1, in which the spoon blade module is provided with a collection channel on the underside.

Claim 8 (previously presented): The vaginal speculum as claimed in claim 1, wherein the handle module and the spoon blade module are attached to each other by a connection consisting of slots in the end face of one of the two modules, on the one hand, and insertion parts on the end face of the other module, on the other hand, which insertion parts are inserted into the slots.

Claim 9 (currently amended): An assembly comprising ~~a handle module for a~~ vaginal speculum as claimed in claim 1, ~~the vaginal speculum having further comprising~~ two or more spoon blade modules.

Claim 10 (original): The assembly as claimed in claim 9, in which the two or more spoon blade modules comprise at least two spoon blade modules with mutually differing dimensions.

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Claim 11 (previously presented): The assembly as claimed in claim 1, in which the transmission means comprises a transmission rod extending through the spoon blade module and adapted for translation in its longitudinal direction, in which the locking means comprise a tooth system provided on the transmission rod and fixing means acting upon the tooth system for fixing, in a disconnectable manner, the transmission rod with respect to the spoon blade module.